

5-2-1973

## Democratic Conference

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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COPY  
REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

AT THE

DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

Wednesday, May 2, 1973, Room S-207, U. S. Capitol, 2:00 P. M.

In accord with the mandate of the Conference, I have called for this meeting to report on various discussions involving the Resolution which the Conference adopted on March 13. The Conference asked that I report back by April 30. I must apologize for being two days late. I delayed in order to be able to include a report on the meeting of the Policy Committee of this Conference on yesterday.

At that time, the Committee returned to a consideration of some of the matters which confronted the nation before the floodgate opened on the Watergate. The issues which were before us at the beginning of the Easter recess are still there. Inflation...Disruption of federal programs by the arbitrary recasting of appropriations by the Executive Branch...A gross imbalance in the budget...Wasteful defense expenditures, especially abroad...All the issues remain.

What is our responsibility in the situation? What is the Majority responsibility in the Senate? It seems to me that when the Democratic Majority obtained the creation of the Ervin Committee at the outset of the session, we did what had to be done by the Senate in the Watergate Affair. The matter, properly, in my judgment, now rests with that Committee, the Judiciary and the President.

It remains for us to carry on with the regular business of the Senate and the Federal Government. To pick up from where we left off, you will recall that just before the recess, the Administration announced plans to close down or cut back 274 military bases in this country, with a possible termination of



42,000 jobs. On the same day of the announcement the President saw fit to criticize "those who would slash the defense budget," an apparent reference to the resolution adopted by the Democratic Policy Committee calling for reductions of defense expenditures abroad in contrast to Administration plans for cuts at home. Still, on the same day, Secretary of Defense Richardson told the press (in connection with the closing of domestic bases) that measures designed to reduce installations abroad were under intensive review.

Two resolutions adopted by the Democratic Policy Committee relate to these Janus-like statements. The first resolution--which was endorsed at the last Conference of Democratic Senators with only four dissenting votes--urges a substantial reduction of U. S. overseas military expenditures.

Pursuant to that resolution, the Leadership has held meetings with the Chairmen of the Committee on Appropriations and Foreign Relations and with the Acting Chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I believe it is accurate to say that, generally, we have seen eye to eye on the question.

We have also met with Mr. Ash of the Office of Management and Budget. While the meeting was cordial enough, there was no indication that the Administration was about to reconsider in any way its position on a reduction in overseas expenditures or a reshuffling of budget priorities.

A second resolution which was approved before the Easter recess by the Policy Committee is directly related to the resolution on reductions of military expenditures overseas. It is this resolution which the Policy Committee directed me to place, today, before the Conference. It calls for a Congressional cut in expenditures below the President's budgetary proposal. In this connection, it makes reference to the resolution on reduction of military expenditures abroad as a key to the cut as well as to more emphasis on domestic needs

As further directed by the Committee, I wrote to the 17 Standing Committee Chairmen and the Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and submit



at this time the replies which have been received for incorporation in the record. I can report that the Committee Chairmen, in general, support the intent of the resolution.

I would note, in particular, that the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee has already moved to set a ceiling on appropriations which is \$1.6 billion below the President's budget ceiling. Senator McClellan's figures list the Defense Appropriations figure as \$3 billion below the President's budget, while Agriculture, Environmental and Consumer Protection appropriations are \$801 million above the Administration's proposed budget and the Labor, HEW figure \$2.2 billion above.

May I say that the Policy Committee resolution which will be laid before you does not ask for a specific endorsement of the tentative adjustments which are being considered by the Appropriations Committee. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that these adjustments do go in the direction of the resolution of the Policy Committee. As such, they represent a most commendable initiative by the Chairman and Members of the Appropriations Committee.

I might also remind you that the Senate has already put the spirit of this proposed resolution of the Policy Committee into legislative form by passing the Muskie amendment providing that spending should not exceed \$268 billion-- which is below the President's figure. It may be that the Senate will cut even more deeply before the session is completed. But, again, the Muskie amendment is in accord with the objective of the Policy Committee resolution and is, in my judgment, a very worthwhile step in the right direction.

Before having the Policy Committee resolution read, let me remind the Conference that we operate on a two-thirds vote. What we are asking here is not the dotting of every "i" or the crossing of every "t" in this resolution. We recognize that there are other ways in which the issue might be stated. I daresay



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some of us would go further and some not so far or some would go the same distance but say it differently. But what your Policy Committee is looking for in this and in all of its proposed resolutions is the establishment by this Conference of general ground on which the great majority of us, as Democrats in the Senate, are prepared to stand on specific issues. The Senate as a whole will work its will in its own way and each Member will vote as he sees fit on the floor. That does not excuse us, particularly at this time, of national confusion, from trying to define our approach as Democrats in the Senate to the issues which confront the nation, for our own guidance and for the information of the nation.

If the Conference concurs in the resolution which will be put to you shortly, it will be referred to the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee as an expression of the overwhelming sentiments of the Democratic Majority. We may be able, thereafter, by legislative action, to cut the budget and to bring about reductions in military expenditures overseas. I repeat, what we are asking is not the end-all in this matter. Individual Members may wish to do more or less than what is suggested in this resolution and, of course, that will be made plain in Committee or on the floor of the Senate.

I think, however, that there is no single unified act which we can take at this time which would more clearly separate the Senate Democratic Majority from the Executive Branch in a very fundamental way than the adoption of this resolution. I think we should stand, as a party, in calling on the Administration to modify its apparent determination to maintain existing military arrangements abroad regardless of archaic purpose, regardless of immense cost, regardless of budgetary deficits, regardless of current domestic needs and inflation and regardless of the devastation which has been wrought on the value of the dollar.

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*Handwritten notes:*  
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